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FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
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DEPT FOR NEA/EX, NEA/ARP, S/CT, DS/IP/NEA, DS/IP, ITA, CA,
INR, AND DS/IP/SPC/MSG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/30/2018
TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: DHAHRAN EAC DECEMBER 30, 2008 - REVIEW SECURITY
AND STATUS OF SITUATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE
DHAHRAN SENDS

Classified By: Consul General Joseph Kenny for reasons
1.4 (d) and (g).

11. (S/NF) SUMMARY: On December 30, 2008, the Consul General convened a meeting of the Emergency Action Committee (EAC) to review the status of Consulate General Dhahran security as it relates to the present Israeli Palestinian conflict. It was noted the planned social outing to the Qatif area for January 1, 2009, has been postponed. RSO contacts have reported there has been little change in the local activity relating to the Israeli/Palestinian issue, however, it was noted there was a report from a major news source that a protest was ended in the Qatif area when police fired rubber bullets at the protesters. EAC members noted the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) have increased their presence in front of the consulate as requested. EAC members agreed the current high level of security at the consulate, along with the increased presence of the MOI and SANG, did not warrant a change and was appropriate to meet the threat level. Events in the Kingdom and in Israel will be monitored and shared with the RSO to determine if additional security measures are required. Present for the meeting were CG, DHS, CONS, RAO, RSO, MSG, and IMO. END SUMMARY

12. (S/NF) The Consul General opened the meeting by discussing his recent communications with AMEMBASSY RIYADH Charge d'Affairs Rundell. The Consul General stated that after considering the present situation in the Eastern Province, the December 28, 2008, Dhahran EAC meeting and the telephone call with the Charge d'Affairs, he determined it was in the best interest of all involved to postpone the planned social trip to the Qatif area. The Qatif area is historically known for its support of the Palestinian cause, with occasional demonstrations in support of the same. This social trip was planned for January 1, 2009, but given the current heightened tensions in the region resulting from the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the Consul General thought the trip would be more properly suited if made at a later date. In conjunction with this decision, the EAC discussed travel in the Eastern Province. The current travel restrictions meet the general threat for the region. However, it was re-emphasized by the Consul General that employees should be extra alert and cautions during their movements within the Eastern Province and attempt to be less visible.

13. (S/NF) The ARSO told the group that he had been in contact with western contacts in the region regarding the level of local activity in support of the Palestinians. All of the contacts reported that there has not been an increase in the level of activity. However, the ARSO noted to the EAC that Reuters reported that on December 29, 2008, 200-300 people took part in a pro-Palestinian protest march in the area of Qatif. This protest was disbursed when Saudi police fired rubber bullets into the crowd. According to the news

report, the Saudi government denied that the protest took place.

¶4. (S/NF) The ARSO advised the EAC that the SANG and MOI did respond to the request for an additional presence at the consulate by providing more men and another vehicle. However, after less than one day, the level of support decreased, returning to normal levels. The ARSO stated he has inquired to the SANG and MOI about the request to maintain an increased presence through January 3, 2009. Both the SANG and MOI assured him the increased presence would be provided. NOTE: As of writing the time of writing this cable, the SANG and MOI have returned to the increased presence as requested.

¶5. (C) The MSG Detachment Commander stated his Marines are aware of the potential restriction on their liberties should Israel cross the border into Gaza. He further stated he has made Bahrain off limits to his Marines until further notice.

¶6. (S) The Consular Chief stated she would contact AMEMBASSY RIYADH regarding the dissemination of a warden message. All EAC members agreed that a warden message cautioning travel in the Kingdom, especially to areas with strong sympathy for the Palestinian cause, would be appropriate.

¶7. (C) The EAC members concluded the meeting by agreeing the situation requires continued diligent monitoring and that the actions taken by either side in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict may change the dynamic at any time. Any information that could impact security should be communicated to the RSO as soon as possible.

¶8. (U) The POC for this cable is ARSO Charles Flynn

(APPROVED: KENNY)
RUNDELL